

THE STOLEN SHAKESPEARE

Astro, Master of Mysteries, Fails to Run Down His Quarry

By ALAN BRAGHAMPTON

Drawings by Karl Anderson

MR. BARRISTER," Valeska announced, and left the two men.

The newcomer looked about a bit foolishly, and then turned to the palmist. "You're Astro, I suppose?"

The young man in the robe and turban bowed gravely and his glance slumbered.

"Eh—ah—the fact is, sir," continued Barrister, "that I have come here about a peculiar matter, and solely, sir, to please my wife. She has a woman's weakness for anything occult,—anything full of folderol and fake. You see, I don't take any stock in it myself; but—"

"I understand perfectly," said the Master of Mysteries without apparent annoyance. He seemed, in fact, to be already bored.

The other teetered affably on his toes and heels, condescension in his manner. "She had heard that you professed to be some kind of medium, besides doing this palmistry business. Is that so?"

"I have had occasion at times to use certain powers which are—ah—supposed to be occult. I say 'supposed to be,' out of deference to your manifest feelings in the matter, Mr. Barrister."

"Hum!" said the prospective client quickly. "Well, whether they are or not doesn't matter in this case, as I'm simply here to please my wife. If I didn't come, she'd come, you know. However, if you are able to locate what we want, I'll be willing to acknowledge anything you wish, and pay you accordingly. I suppose you are a medium, then?"

"Some call it that," acknowledged the reserved young man. "I myself assert that I have merely done a few things that others find it too hard to do."

"Such as—"

"Kindly let me look at your hand."

"Bosh!" said Barrister; but he gazed at his own palm, nevertheless, with a new air of curiosity, and after a moment stretched it toward the palmist. "Well, see what you can find in it!" he said.

Astro looked at it negligently; then, under his half shut lids his eyes sped rapidly over his client's person, the neat business suit beneath the black dress overcoat, the daintily tied scarf, the highly polished shoes, and the general air of careful grooming. Then they returned to the hand before him. Finally, the seer leaned back listlessly and smiled.

"You went to see Anna Held last night, and were bored. You once had your pocket picked, and will probably have it happen to you again. You are interested in Egyptology—and, apropos, I wish you'd look at my porphyry sphinx there and give me some idea of its age."

Barrister stared, and grew a bit uneasy. Then, apparently to hide his embarrassment, he turned to the carved image and surveyed it with the air of a connoisseur. As he presented his back to the seer, the latter swiftly stooped over, picked up a return check of a New York theater good the night before, and slid it into one of the pockets of his silk robe.

"That's about 1400 B. C.," said Barrister easily.

"Where on earth did you get hold of it?"

"From my godfather, in Cairo," said the palmist.

"Well," said Barrister, returning, "I've no time now to examine it closely."

AND the matter which worries your wife?" Astro inquired.

Again his visitor hesitated, looked about the room, and gazed again at the sphinx. "Well," he said finally, "I'll tell you." He seated himself and went on: "I have, or rather did have, a First Folio Shakespeare, one of the few genuine ones of the thirty-seven copies extant. It was stolen from my library yesterday. That's what I want to find—"

"That, and the one who stole it also, I suppose?"

"Er—yes. Yes, certainly."

"An interesting sort of quarry, and rather unusual. Have you been to the police?"

"No. You see, there wouldn't be much use in that, would there? I'm afraid the thief, if he found he was suspected, would destroy the book. He

can't sell it, anyway; for these folios are as well known to collectors as good race horses are to touts. He can't get away with it; for every bookman in the world will soon know it if he offers it for sale. I want it back, of course; and this is my wife's idea, this coming to you about it. She gave me the book when we were first married, and so, naturally, I value it at even more than its own great intrinsic value."

"Have you ever had any offers for it?" Astro asked carelessly.

"What? Offers? Oh, no; no indeed; no offers at all. Why should I want to sell it? No, sir! It would be useless for anyone to attempt to buy it."

"But nobody is harming you by offering. When did you miss it?"

"Last night, after I came home from the theater. I went to see Anna Held, as you said, though how the mischief you knew I can't see, and we came home early, of course. We happened to be talking about the folio, and my wife walked to the case and looked for it. It was gone."

"Was the lock tampered with?"

"Yes; forced. The window had been pried open with a jimmy too. It was evidently done by a burglar that knew just what he wanted. But it doesn't look like a professional's work; for the book would be too hard to dispose of."

"I see," said Astro. He gazed away into space and puffed at his water pipe meditatively. "Mr. Barrister, I'll try to find it for you. If I succeed in getting the book or the person that stole it from you, my charge will be five hundred dollars."

"All right," said Barrister, rising. "Will you want to come up to my house and look over the place?"

"I think I can put myself more in rapport with the case, if I do; I want to feel the vibrations, so to speak, and no doubt I'll get an impression of

the aura of the culprit if I am on the spot. The rest I shall do with the crystals."

Barrister did not conceal his scorn. "Oh, very well," he said, "I suppose it will at least satisfy my wife. When will you be up?"

"To-morrow morning, early. I'll ask you to disturb nothing, and even to keep away from the room until I come."

"There's nothing to disturb," Barrister commented; "but I'll see to it that nobody interferes with your magic." And so saying, he took up his hat, gave the sphinx one last glance, and left the room.

THE moment he was gone the palmist doffed his regalia and yawned. A moment later the girl reentered the studio. Astro gazed at her reflectively.

"Didn't you notice that man's watch charm?" he asked.

"Why, there was something funny about it; but I couldn't make the thing out exactly."

"Did you ever see an Egyptian scarab?"

"Why, yes. But he didn't have one, did he?"

"He used to have one. You know how they mount them,—with a pin through the beetle so it can revolve? The setting and the pin were there; but not the stone. You must look closer next time."

"What else did I miss?" she asked, frowning.

"You didn't say anything about his carrying his purse in his outside overcoat pocket. He will always be an easy mark for the light fingered gentry if he keeps that up. It's lucky for him that he's rich."

"Oh, he is wealthy, then! I got that much right, anyway. He looked as if he was well off."

"I should imagine he was, with a First Folio Shakespeare lying loose in his library! That's what we've got to find."

"It's interesting?"

"Interesting! I should say so! It's a regular kidnapping case. Talk about diamonds! Why, they're stupid things. Everyone likes diamonds, and they can be cut up into smaller stones and readily disposed of, if you're careful about it. But you can't cut a page out of a First Folio, you can't

even hint that you'd like to sell it, without all the world knowing about it. Book hunters are the most determined and interesting collectors in the world. I know of no passion to equal it."

He walked over to the telephone and called up a leading dealer in rare volumes.

"I wish to ask about a First Folio Shakespeare. Are there any bidders in the open market for a copy?" He wrote down rapidly on a tab as he spoke into the receiver,—"William A. Hepson. Oh, yes, the millionaire. Ah, thank you."

He slammed the instrument down vigorously, snatched up a telegraph blank, rapidly wrote a message, and handed it to Valeska.

She read it aloud:

WILLIAM A. HEPSON, Chicago, Ill.—Will you give four thousand dollars for a guaranteed First Folio Shakespeare? Wire reply to Jane Gore, 181 East 18th-st., New York.

"My!" she exclaimed. "Have you located it already?"

"Not quite. But I have an idea, and this will help if we get an answer by to-morrow morning."

"Who is he?"

"He's a Chicago beef packer who offered four thousand dollars for the book awhile ago; but, curiously enough, he was in town this week."

"Is he in the city now?"

"That's what I should like very much to know myself. In the meantime, send this, get the answer at your place, and bring it to me in the morning. Then we'll go up and see Mrs. Barrister."

VALESKA appeared next morning with a yellow envelop. "He refuses your offer," she said.

"Good!" shouted the Master of Mysteries, rubbing his hands in satisfaction. "He has the folio, then, as I suspected. Now, to work! This case already begins to offer delicate little labyrinths which are nothing short of delicious to the analytical mind. We'll lose no time getting out to Mrs. Bar-



Finally, Dismayed, He Took the Check from Valeska.

risters, and I want you to use your eyes better than you did last night. I expect you to see everything that I don't. Remember to watch me, though, and be ready for instructions. Notice any signal I may happen to give you. For instance, if I raise my eyes to the ceiling, my next look will be at what I want you to notice. If I touch anything, you're to take it and look at it carefully, and follow what I say next. If I cough, you're to create some diversion so that I won't be noticed for a few moments."

Valeska laughed. "You'll be doing a trance next. Funny how well the bluff always works, isn't it?"

Astro frowned. "My dear," he said pompously, "there are waves of the ether, N rays, and ultra-violet vibrations to which I am exceedingly susceptible. I have an inner sense and an esoteric knowledge of life and its mysteries that is hidden from all who have not lived for cycles and eons in solitude and contemplation with the Mahatmas of the Himalayas!"

Valeska, instead of being impressed, broke into a rippling laugh as they went up the sidewalk.

THE Barristers lived in a large, solemn brownstone house off Fifth-ave., one of a hundred similar domiciles, heavily furnished, dim, close, lusterless, quiet, warm. Astro and his assistant waited in the reception room till Mrs. Barrister appeared. She was large, plumply built, with gray hair artfully pompadoured and undulated, and a pleasant, though not very intelligent, smile; a woman that still kept herself well and carried herself well, treasuring the last remains of what had been a comfortable prettiness. She greeted them cordially.

"I'm so glad you've come!" she announced. "Seems as if I couldn't wait any longer; for I felt sure that you could help us if anybody could, and I do feel so terribly about this robbery! You know it was my wedding gift to Mr. Barrister. My husband agreed with me that it wasn't exactly a case for the police, and we don't want any more talk about it than is absolutely necessary. I've heard so much about you, Mr. Astro; for a great many of my friends have gone to you, and you told them such remarkable things! Then that case of your finding the Sacarnet sapphire gave me considerable confidence in you. Why, my own mother once recovered a purse she had lost, by going to a medium about it!" She bustled about amiably.

"Now, I suppose you want to see the library, don't you? You know, Mr. Barrister doesn't believe in anything supernatural, and he wouldn't stay. But I'll show you in."

During this long speech, Valeska's eyes traveled over Mrs. Barrister's portly person; but the Master of Mysteries seemed rapt in thought, abstracted and inattentive. He rose now, however, and followed through the folding doors into the library beyond. The shades had been drawn as if a death had occurred, and now she raised them, showing a square room, lined on every wall with glass cov-

ered bookcases. She went up to one, beside a window, and threw open a door. It was as if she was displaying a rifled tomb.

"Here is where it was kept,—right in there. You see the marks of a chisel or something near the lock. The frame was pried open. Isn't it dreadful? That book was like an only child to us."

Astro apparently gave it scarcely a glance. "Mrs. Barrister," he said, "I'll ask you kindly to leave me here alone for fifteen minutes. I am extraordinarily sensitive to vibrations; but I must be undisturbed while I concentrate my mind sufficiently to induce the proper psychic conditions. Meanwhile my assistant will stay with you."

MRS. BARRISTER was impressed, and withdrew without further questioning. The door of the library was shut, and the two women sat down by a window in the reception room. Valeska immediately began her own line of investigation.

"When did you last see the book?" she asked.

"Thursday afternoon about four o'clock I showed it to a caller, and then locked the case as usual. We got home from the theater that night a little after ten, and went almost immediately to the library, as we had been having a discussion about one of the lines in 'Macbeth.' Then we saw the book was gone."

"Do you know of anyone having entered the room, besides yourself and Mr. Barrister, between four and ten?"

"Mary, my maid, was in with the tea things; that's all I know."

"And you don't suspect her?"

"Oh, no! She has been with me for years."

"And the caller?"

Mrs. Barrister thought for a moment before answering. Then she said, "It was a Mr. White. I confess I don't like him very well. But he's more a friend of my husband's than mine. In fact, my husband came in before Mr. White left; so I went up stairs and left the two men alone. I had an idea there was some trouble between them."

"Does your husband belong to any club?"

"Yes, the Booklovers, and to the Stage Club. So does Mr. White. Why?"

"Oh," said Valeska carelessly, "he seemed such a man of the world,—just the man to belong to clubs, you know. But who showed Mr. White out the door?"

"Why, Mr. Barrister went with him himself. You see, it couldn't have been possible for him to have taken the book; it's quite large, you know."

"You have looked everywhere, of course?"

"Oh, yes. We went immediately to work, went through Mary's room at her request, and then everywhere else in the house. It simply isn't here."

AT this moment Astro opened the door and walked silently into the room.

"Oh," Mrs. Barrister suddenly exclaimed, "I quite forgot to tell Mr. Astro something that I'm sure is important! It's a clue we discovered while we were

searching the library after we had found the scratches and the broken lock of the window. Here it is!" She drew a scrap of paper from her purse and handed it to him. It was evidently the corner of a letter, and bore a few words written in violet ink.

The palmist held it lightly in his hand for a moment, then asked, "Has anyone else had this, except you?"

"Oh, yes. Mr. Barrister himself found it, and of course he examined it carefully; but he could make nothing of it."

Astro cast his eyes to the ceiling, and then down on the paper again. He pressed it to his forehead, then handed it to his assistant.

"I shall have to wait until the last influences are evaporated, leaving the original personality of the writer to assert itself." He whirled quickly about, placed his hand to his lips, and coughed.

"Oh, Mrs. Barrister!" Valeska exclaimed. "Look at this paper again for a moment. Come to the light by the window here. It seemed to me I saw a watermark that showed through when I held it to the light. See if you can see it." As she spoke she drew the woman into the bay window so that she stood with her back to the room.

Astro stepped quickly over to a bookcase against the wall, and, keeping his eyes carefully on Mrs. Barrister, reached to the top of one of the shelves. Four or five books protruded about an inch from the rest of the line. Astro's hand curved over these and down behind until it touched the shelf. Before Mrs. Barrister had turned again, his hand was withdrawn. He spoke sharply.

"Could you lend me a screwdriver?"

"Certainly." She rang for the maid, who appeared, and was sent on the errand. In a few minutes she returned.

"I'm very sorry, Mrs. Barrister, but I can't find it. We always keep it in the kitchen closet; but it's not there now."

"I thought so," said Astro. "But one question, Mary, before you go. First, let me see your palm."

The girl held out her hand timidly, with wonder in her face.

The Master of Mysteries felt of it tentatively, then looked directly into her eyes. "Mary," he said, "where were you after dinner time on Thursday; from then until Mr. and Mrs. Barrister returned home?"

"In the kitchen with the cook most of the time, sir. I went up into the dining room beside the library once or twice, though."

"You heard nothing unusual?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

"How did you get that violet stain on your finger?"

Mary looked at it calmly. "It was from writing a letter the other day. I couldn't get it all off."

"I think I have stayed as long as it necessary," said Astro, turning to Mrs. Barrister, "and now, if you'll excuse me, I'll go. I shall report to your husband as soon as I find anything."

LEAVING with his assistant, he walked slowly down the front steps. As soon as they were out of sight of the windows, he said, "Well, what did you find out while I was investigating, Valeska?"

She narrated the conversation, while Astro walked thoughtfully beside her, his eyes roaming from side to side, until they lit upon a line of ash barrels near the curb. He stopped.

"See here, Valeska!" he exclaimed suddenly. "I wish you'd go in to this house and find out in some way how long these barrels have been standing here. It's a shame the way the Board of Health neglects its duties. Do you see? Tell them you have been sent by a Civic Reform committee to find out if there's any complaint."

He walked on, smiling to himself. "Entirely too clever," he murmured; "so clever that it's positively stupid!" He approached the ash cans and surveyed their contents. From the top of one he gingerly drew out a torn sheet of paper. Another barrel showed, among its overflowing contents, several tin cans, a shoe, a lot of broken bottles, and a mass of sawdust. He gave this one a hard look, then sauntered on till Valeska caught up with him.

"Those barrels have been out since Thursday," she said.

He smiled and made no comment. "Now," he said, "what I want you to do is to call on this Mr. White. You had better be getting subscriptions for a book. Get one for a sample at some shop,—something rather silly too—'Bibliophiles and Their Hobbies,'—and you are to find out White's private opinion of Barrister. Barrister, you understand, has already subscribed. You can work it up anyway you like, only be sure to get some expression of opinion."

IT was almost noon before Valeska returned from her errand, and, as by this time the palmist's outer office was filled with waiting clients, it was lunch time before she could speak to him.

"I'll have to raise my fee again," he said. "Ten dollars a reading doesn't seem to stop them at all. I'll make them come only by appointment after this. But what did you find out?"

The girl's eyes sparkled with news. "Hepson's our man,—Hepson via White, I guess. Hepson saw Barrister too at the club the other morning. Hepson's gone; but White—"

"Hepson, Hepson, Hepson!" mimicked the seer,

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DEFINED IN EPIGRAM

By William George Jordan

SUPERSTITION

Seeing supernatural significance in natural phenomena.
Ignorance making its guesses its gospel.
Loyalty to dead traditions of belief.
Treating the Infinite as a monster to be placated or a fool to be cajoled.
Religion grown rancid through perversion.
Seeking to scale the heights of Heaven by ladders of mere rite and ceremony.
Ascribing abnormal warning power to mere coincidences.
Senseless, servile fear adulterating religion.

TACT

The diplomacy of kindness.
Courteous consideration wedded to quick wit.
First aid to the injured, in conversation.
Delicate self adjustment to the individuality of others.
Smoothing the seamy side of situations.
Doing a kindly act in the kindest way.
Clever seamanship among the rocks and shoals of conversation.
Instinctive fineness of action meeting a sudden need.
Watching the time and tide of another's mood.
Emotion controlled by expediency.

CALMNESS

The poise of the soul.
Peace and power through self control.
Kingship over the emotions.
The disciplined soul asserting itself in an emergency.
The mind's serene superiority to outward storm.
Mastering emotion, not masking it.
The will chastened and dignified in suffering.
The atmosphere of a soul at peace with itself.
Living in the holy of holies of individual conquest.
The peace and restfulness of the depths of our nature.

PESSIMISM

Mental dyspepsia.
The stepmother of despair.
Moral blindness boasting of its clear vision.
Poisoning the waters of another's hope.
The kindergarten stage of atheism.
Viewing life as a proofreader, with eyes trained to see only error.
Universal suspicion on the rampage.
Mental color blindness that sees only black.
Living in an atmosphere of sneer, snarl, and sarcasm.
Dissecting a nightingale to prove it has no song.

JEALOUSY

Morbid distrust of one's supremacy.
Restless rebellion against real or fancied rivalry.
The heart's hunger for the sacredness of sole possession.
Living in the shadows of love, not its sunshine.
Suspicion breeding doubts of loyalty.
A stain on the ermine of love's faith.
Fear of loss poisoning the waters of possession.
An agony of doubt torturing the soul of trust.
A mental poison that in small doses stimulates love, in larger ones, kills it.

The Stolen Shakespeare

Continued from page 8

with a smile at her eagerness. "But pray give us more news about White."

Valeska laughed. "Well, he's awfully sore on Barrister for some reason. He believes he's a fool, I gather."

"He isn't in love with Mrs. Barrister, is he?" "No! He's in love with himself, I think. He said, for one thing, that Barrister knew no more about books than he did about poker."

"Poker! How's that?"

"Why, I told him I had sold several copies to members of the Stage Club.—I got their names out of the Blue Book, and knew they played pretty hard there,—so we got to chatting about our luck. You see, I told him I liked to play myself, and he began telling me how successful he always was. Then he said he had hard work with some of his friends to collect the gambling debts they owed him."

"I see." The Master of Mysteries turned into his den, and Valeska followed him.

"Why, what's this?" she asked, pointing to a large, flat, heavy parcel on the table. "Why, it's addressed to Mr. Hepson in Chicago! Oh! have you found the folio already?"

Astro smiled. "I told you sometime ago that Hepson already had it. But this is getting warm."

Valeska fingered the package. "It looks just like a big atlas wrapped up."

"It is," said Astro. "I bought it at a bookshop after I left you."

"What in the world do you want to send it to Hepson for, then?"

"I don't particularly. But I should like to show it to the clerk at a certain branch office of the Adams Express Company here."

"Oh, I do wish you'd explain!" Valeska exclaimed.

"I'd rather let you do a little thinking for yourself. You have seen White. You know that Hepson was in town. You have heard Barrister's story. Nothing could be simpler. For instance, how about Mary the maid, and the violet ink stands? What disposition would you make of that?" He stopped a moment, smiling. "I will tell you, however, that I found the screwdriver that was used to open the bookcase with, and to force the window with; for it wasn't a jimmy at all."

"Where was it?"

"You recall when I gave you the signal to distract Mrs. Barrister's attention? You did it very cleverly. At that moment I was more interested in the appearance of several books in a case in the reception room than I was in the scrap of paper. The instrument, badly bent and twisted, was behind those projecting books."

"Oh!" Valeska studied at it. "No wonder Mary couldn't find it! Then it must have been Mary, after all. But why didn't she throw the screwdriver away? Perhaps she thought it would be missed, and wanted a chance to have it straightened out."

"Perhaps so," said Astro dryly.

"But what about the scrap of paper, then?" asked the girl. "Have you made anything of that?"

"A good deal," replied the Master. "For instance, here's the rest of the sheet," and he took from his pocket the portion that he had removed from the ash barrel. "Does that give you a clue?"

She studied a moment. "Now, wait! Don't tell me, please! Your rule is, 'Ask yourself what there is about this crime that distinguishes it from others. How is it different from the ordinary run of things? Then seize upon that difference, be it great or small, and proceed logically and analytically in any direction it offers.' But what is different? It's all different, it seems to me."

"Well, you work it out, and I'll go down and try to find an express office in which flat parcels addressed to Chicago millionaires will not be surprising. You may turn away any people that come for a reading. This is going to bring in more money than I thought, and it will pay to follow it up while it's hot."

Valeska met him at the front door when he returned, and said in a low voice, "Mr. Barrister is here."

"Certainly," said Astro. "I telephoned him to be here at four o'clock."

"Then you are finished?"

"You'll see."

"I found out that White had left town today," she announced.

"Aha!" said the seer cryptically.

He went in and bowed gravely to Barrister in the reception room. Valeska busied herself at her desk and watched under her brows. Astro took his accustomed seat on the divan.

"Mr. Barrister," he said, after a pause. "I am sorry to say that I have been unable to find either the folio or the thief."

The other immediately rose, shaking his head emphatically and triumphantly. "I thought as much," he said. "This is what all this charlatanism usually amounts to. You're all alike,—you can impose upon credulous women; but when it comes to actually accomplishing anything, you can't deliver the goods. However, I've satisfied my wife, at any rate. I suppose there will be no charge in these circumstances, Mr. Astro?"

The Master of Mysteries twirled his thumbs and spoke dreamily. "On the contrary, Mr. Barrister, my services on this case will cost you just one thousand dollars."

His client stared at him indignantly. His brow drew down. "What in the world do you mean, sir? One thousand dollars?"

"One thousand dollars is my fee. I can

give you a blank check if you haven't your book with you."

"But you've discovered nothing!" "I said that I had not found the book or the thief."

"And yet your fee, if you had found either, was to have been only five hundred! I don't understand what you are driving at, sir!"

Astro recrossed his legs and gave his client gaze for gaze. He spoke now very deliberately. His languorous tone had given place to a crisp, hard enunciation. "Mr. Barrister," he said, "what you say is true. You understand me perfectly. If I had told you the name of the thief and the location of the book, I should have charged you only five hundred dollars. My price for not telling you is one thousand. Do you understand me now?"

Barrister's face had changed from perplexity to anger, and then to a sudden comprehension. He dropped his head and gazed at the carpet, standing for some moments irresolute and dismayed. Finally he walked to the desk, took the blank check that Valeska handed to him, and dipped his pen into the ink. He looked up.

"You never expect to find the culprit, I suppose?" he asked, with a strange expression on his face.

"I never expect to," answered the seer.

Barrister signed his name and handed over the check. "You are a most extraordinary young man, sir!" he snarled, and left the room, slamming the door behind him.

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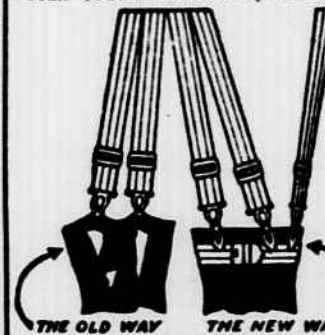
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Co-operatively produced by and a part of the

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of the

Chicago Record-Herald

St. Louis Republic

Pittsburg Post

Philadelphia Press

Rocky Mountain News and Denver Times

New-York Tribune

Boston Post

Washington Star

Minneapolis Journal

Actual Average Weekly Circulation for 1907

1,020,115

ADVERTISING RATES

Per agate line	\$3.00
Quarter page, 180 lines	500.00
Half page, 360 lines	1,000.00
Full page, 720 lines	2,000.00
Back cover page, lithographed in six colors	2,400.00
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lutely connected Barrister with his own misdeeds.

"Hadden't I? If you had gone into about ten branch express offices in the down town district as I had, you'd find out. You recall my package? It was just the same size as the folio. I finally found the office that I was looking for, and said to the clerk, 'I sent a package to Mr. Hepson two days ago, and he telegraphs that it hasn't been received. So I'm sending this. I wish you'd look it up and see what's the matter. It's from Renold M. White.' Well, the clerk looked over his record of carbon duplicate receipts, and said, 'There was a package sent from a Mr. Barrister to a Mr. Hepson in Chicago; but none from

White.' So I said, 'Never mind,' and left."

THE two sat in silence for sometime. At last the Master of Mysteries spoke:

"There is just one thing I don't like about this case of the theft of the First Folio Shakespeare."

"What's that?" asked Valeska.

"This is the first time I go on record as not having run down my quarry; but it has paid fairly well—for two days' work." And he smiled as he lit his narghile.

The third story in this series, "The Macdougall Street Dynamite Outrage," will appear Sunday after next.

Along the Barraclaw

Continued from page 13

trying to find his way to the church, fearing that the dugout could not live through the impending storm, when he heard Jack's call.

The water was higher now, lapping across the door sill. They could not see each other's faces; but they could hear the swish-swish of the waves, as they entered the door and washed in deepening ripples over the floor. The minister knelt on the pulpit platform and prayed solemnly for their lives, or the grace to die like men. The wind of March was up, whipping the waves into a dull roar, whitecaps that raced across the sill ghost white under the struggling moon; and over the clamor of the storm the earnest voice rose in pleading, face to face with his God.

Wilder grew the storm, and the water ran freely through the church. It reached the platform and covered it, and there was nothing left but the top of the pulpit, scarcely four feet square. Nancy was crying softly as they mounted it; yet bravely strove to make no useless moan.

JACK laid his hand on the minister's arm.

"Parson, as me an' Nancy was a-goin' ter git joined jes' as soon as ther old man was settled with his new woman. Her an' me has talked it over lots of times; but she couldn't leave the children, her mammy havin' made her promise to stay along with 'em, when she was a-dyin'; but when Lem tuk ther notion ter set ter ther Widow Steele it opened ther way for us two, as you might say. I was a thinkin'—" He paused sheepishly and shifted his feet—"I was a thinkin' as how therre don't 'pear ter be much chance of us a-gettin' outen this, with that there watah a-comin' higher ev'ry minute, an' how her an' me would like ter have you marry us afore we're called away."

"But Jack, how about the license? It would not be legal without that."

"I've thought of that, parson; but 'tain't no matter. My ma an' pa what has lived hereabouts all the'r lives was joined without no license. There wa'n't no sich fool law in them days. Not that I'm a meanin' ter say

nuthin' ag'in' ther law; but, parson, ther' hain't nowhar in ther lids of ther Bible where it tells erbout county court houses. Ther Lawd done giv' you ther right ter marry me an' Nancy, and it 'pears like He hain't goin' ter let us need no other license. Nancy has knowed me sence we was tads down ter the bayou school, and she knows I'm a-sayin' a true word, when I'm givin' you a solemn promise. Ef ther Lord lets us live, I won't lose no time a-gettin' that license and a-huntin' you up ter do ther job right and tight."

The water lapped the base of the pulpit, and the moon made a white pathway between the tall cypresses, as the minister did some of the most rapid thinking he ever had been called upon to do. Outside, the wind went keening over the reaches of the swamp like a banshee far adrift, and the knocking of the benches as they washed together kept up a ghostly chorus below them. The minister turned to the girl, where she shivered in Jack's encircling arm:

"Nancy Deere, is it your wish that I marry you to this man without the sanction of the law?"

"Yes, parson, him an' me has been sweet-hearts sence we was childern, and we wants ter belong ter each other when we gets over yander."

The minister raised his hands over their bowed heads, and while the water moaned and splashed beneath made them man and wife.

At the close of the simple prayer that followed Jack leaned down and measured the water. It was no higher than it had been a half-hour before. At last it had found its level, and they were safe.

THE sunny spring morning broke over a world of water, smooth as glass, and the frail dugout carried the three down to the settlement, where they found Lem, the widow, and their combined families huddled in the store; and the fragments of the wedding dinner so carefully prepared by the Widow Tarbuton formed the breakfast for the second wedding party.

The Wounded in Time of War

Continued from page 6

line. Moreover, she has perhaps been rammed, torpedoed, or mined, and her stability altered seriously. As to her boats, such as have not been destroyed or burned by an enemy's fire will be so shaken by the terrific concussion of great guns as to be quite useless.

Lastly, possible damage to her engines in addition to all this will add to the dire confusion, and her lighting and ventilating appliances are surely destroyed. In such a case, commonsense tells it is no exaggerated picture, —where can fifty-two sorely wounded men receive the best care and attention, especially the fitting after treatment so necessary to save their lives?

Little wonder the percentage of deaths among the wounded on the Japanese Matsushima, even in these days of wondrous surgery, was twenty-nine per cent., with seventy-six severely injured men huddled together on a ship of her size!

Only One Escape

FROM this terrible condition of things there is only one escape, and that is by the specially built hospital ship. In naval circles it is now being suggested that every sea going fleet should have one or more vessels entirely devoted to hospital work. They should fly the Geneva Cross, and comply in all respects with the terms of the Geneva Convention and those of the Hague Conference. Steaming at twenty knots and keeping easy station with the fastest, the floating hospital should afford ample air, light, and deck space for five hundred cases. Such hospitals should cruise with the fleets; and, having first received all serious cases of illness, they should accompany their fighting sisters to the verge of safety and then leave them to steam into action.

Each hospital ship must carry twelve roomy and handy boats, each taking six or eight cot cases; and with these connection could be maintained with the fighting line. The boats would seize every opportunity, such as a cruiser hauling out of action, to collect and transfer the wounded to the hospital, and in this way the fighting ships would be relieved of a grave embarrassment. On the other hand, it is pointed out that the benefit accruing to the wounded would be incalculable.

This idea has the approval of men like Rear Admiral H. J. May, Lord Charles Beresford,

and Admiral Sir N. Bowden-Smith. The last points out that in peace time the floating hospitals might be cruising and maneuvering with their fleets so as to insure their efficiency in war time. And for the rest of the year they might be used for conveying invalids of both services home from foreign stations. The president of the Royal College of Surgeons in London, Sir Henry G. Howse, advocated the immediate construction of one or two model hospital ships with every hygienic arrangement for serious operations.

Easier in Land Fighting

TURNING to land warfare, we find a much less grave problem, though one which changed conditions have made very serious. For in truth the recovery of wounded on modern battlefields is more difficult than ever before, owing to the enormous range of modern artillery and rifle fire, requiring a battle front perhaps fifty miles long.

Captain Soloviev, of the 34th East Siberian Rifles, a veteran of the last great war, tells that he found rifle fire quite deadly at the immense range of twenty-three hundred and thirty-three yards. Thus, advancing troops exposed to long range fire of this kind will naturally seek cover over a vast area, and the wounded will be correspondingly scattered and hard to find on that account.

Even in the great Franco-Prussian conflict, when conditions were very different, no less than thirteen thousand cases were returned as missing out of a total of one hundred and twenty-nine thousand. And, as several authorities point out, wounded men will use their last strength to crawl into bushes, ditches, and holes for protection against bursting shrapnel, cavalry charges, and the wheels of guns galloping recklessly into action.

For this reason the army medical services of all nations find that they must move with the times and devise new ways of collecting fallen soldiers. The French, German, Italian, and British medical corps have tried captive balloons with great success; and special searchlights, both electric and acetylene, have been devised for night work. But it has been found during realistic maneuvers that their dazzling beams are best adapted for open country only.

In close ground, on the other hand, the brighter the light the darker the shadows